



Vegoe Dedicated to Giving Clients a Voice, Ability to Work

Release Date: December 19, 2012

Contact: Ashley Andre (*Huibregtse*), 608-224-5002
Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

Editors: This is one in a series of stories about DATCP programs and services and the people who work with them.

MADISON – Linda Vegoe is married to her work as the Client Assistance Program (CAP) Director at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). In a position that has high-turnover in other states, Vegoe has worked for CAP for over twenty years and strives to give her clients a voice and ability to work with the assistance they need.

CAP was established by Congress under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide information about services for people with disabilities and to provide assistance when a person is having difficulty receiving those services. The initial service request goes to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) housed in the Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD). But CAP is housed at DATCP to ensure autonomy and independence from DWD. All program costs are federally funded.

"Having Linda and CAP in our agency is an excellent partnership. She has a way of bringing out the best in people when they need it most," said Mike Powers, Division Administrator of DATCP's Agricultural Development. "Whether assisting someone who lives on the farm or off, she turns a very complicated list of services into answers that can change someone's life for the better. It's a perfect complement to the services offered by our staff in the Wisconsin Farm Center."

Vegoe works with Deb Henderson-Guenther, the CAP Complaint Investigator, to answer the thousands of calls the program receives each year. Some calls require a simple answer while others may take multiple meetings, mediation or an investigation. CAP services are completely free to the client.

"I love my work. I sit down with people to help them explain their concerns, resolve differences and move ahead with their plan for employment," said Vegoe. "I explain what DVR can and cannot do in plain English so people don't get caught up on what 'they heard' DVR can do."

Some calls may include interviews or an investigation. At times, mediating with the local supervisor and client can simply clear up a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the services.

"It is the most satisfying when you set up a meeting with the client, family and service professionals, and by the end of the meeting, the client is leading the meeting and making a plan," explained Vegoe. "CAP allows you to be an advocate for the client and is a check and balance for the system."

Vegoe grew up on a farm and often works with farmers in this position. Many people she works with are eager to get back to work after a disability and want to know what vocational rehabilitation services could help make that happen. DVR services may include assessments, career counseling, post-secondary training, or finding the right assistive technology.

For farmers with disabilities, DVR works with AgrAbility because of its expertise in rehabilitation technology and farming. The program shows clients how to continue working by doing things differently. AgrAbility of Wisconsin has been promoting success in agriculture for farmers with disabilities and their families since 1991.



Linda Vegoe is the Client Assistance Program (CAP) Director at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

When Vegoe begins to hear a pattern of similar complaints from clients, she then works with other state departments and agencies to find a solution.

“The number one complaint I receive from clients is that they don’t understand the process to receive services,” added Vegoe. “To help understanding, we created a poster to help clients visualize the planning process.”

Vegoe believes DVR is a very successful program because it involves planning and progress measures that lead directly to getting people back to work.

Vegoe studied social work at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and completed work towards a master’s degree at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Before coming to CAP, Vegoe worked at Curative Rehabilitation Center and taught at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.

As the CAP Director, Vegoe also serves on the Wisconsin Rehabilitation Council. Each day in her job is different, and each day brings new clients.

“Everyone can work with the right support,” concluded Vegoe. “By helping people with disabilities work with DVR and focus on what they can do, I hope they will find a job they love as much as I do.”

###